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good. The author seems to have grasped quite clearly the fundamental fact which from the first doomed this plan of Reconstruction to failure and ultimate overthrow : that in the end the intelligence and property of a country inevitably will control and administer its affairs. He is an admirer of Mr. Hayes, and would agree with Ingersoll that probably the country needed such a President just at that time. It is equally as apparent that he would not follow Ingersoll in estimating Hayes as merely "a pretty good plaster".

Even for a popular work the book has too much the appearance of having been constructed out of lectures and magazine articles. It purports to bring "history", especially industrial history, right down to date. It has a word even on the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Yet in many places the treatment stops with a date by no means recent, according to the standard of the book. This gives the appearance of old matter worked over without proper revision. A discussion of the development and resources of Texas which fails to mention Beaumont oil can scarcely be called recent, even though published in 1903. Particular attention is given the South and the negro. An entire chapter (XXV.) is devoted to the subject, but it is made up of material and data from the eleventh census, taken fourteen years ago. A map is given (p. 757) which shows the ratio of colored to total population, but its date is 1880. A table (p. 761) exhibits the growth of cotton manufacturing in the southern states, but it comes down only to 1894.

The book makes no appeal to the student. It does not pretend to. It falls naturally and properly into the class of essentially popular works of history. This is true of its text, method, and illustrations. It would be mere captiousness to scrutinize such a book with a view to parading its minor inaccuracies of statement. Its evident purpose is to furnish the general reader with a fairly and honestly presented summary of events within its period. It may be commended as creditably accomplishing this object.

ALFRED HOLT STONE.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal Party: a Political History.

By J. S. WILLISON. (Toronto: George N. Morang and Company, Limited; London: John Murray. 1903. Two vols., pp. 472, 451.)

THESE volumes present a battle-field of controversy to the reviewer whose political camp is not that of Mr. Willison; but if they rouse the spirit of debate, it is because they are an excellent plea for the cause of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberals rather than because they are written in a mood of narrow-minded partizanship. Mr. Willison not only stands in the front rank of Canadian journalists, but is a representative of the best aims which journalism sets before itself in our day. His defense of the Liberals as a party is based upon his advocacy of the principles which have prompted them since the days of confederation. That he heightens the strong points of his case and tends to glide over thin ice is but

natural. For example, he lays bare in a powerful indictment the neglect of Sir John Macdonald to avert the rebellion of the half-breeds, while the subsequent relations of Laurier and Mercier are given much less prominence than they would receive at the hands of a biographer from Mars. His tone, however, toward opponents is fair if not generous, and he shows distinct talent in emphasizing the best features of Canadian public life.

Mr. Willison is fortunate in his subject. Canadians of whatever race or province look upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier with pride and are attracted by his personality. If we except a negligible faction of extremists, it may be said that he has awakened national interest in himself and that national sympathy attends the development of his career. He possesses grace, dignity, eloquence, and an open mind. He has always been a courteous opponent. Even when he has been most outspoken, he has not aroused lasting enmity because he is free from pettiness of spirit. Mr. Willison assures us that he was perfectly sincere in supporting the claims of Sir Richard Cartwright to the leadership of the Liberal party. Doubtless this statement is quite true. Laurier won his hold upon the confidence of the Liberals by his disinterestedness as well as by his gifts. Like Mr. Balfour he has created the conviction that there are things for which he cares more than he does for mere leadership. Though the existence of such a belief strengthens the hands of a prime minister most effectively at the moment when he takes office, it never ceases to be an important asset. But we must not narrow our view to the Liberal party. To Canada at large Sir Wilfrid Laurier is a premier who may be relied on to represent the country with distinction whenever he is brought into contact with the outer world.

At the same time no political leader can escape censure. In the present case it is urged by critics and candid friends that Sir Wilfrid Laurier displayed his natural talents to better advantage when he was in opposition than he has done since he became prime minister. As leader of the opposition he showed himself an eloquent idealist, attacking the corruption of the Conservatives and inveighing against the uselessness of an unreformed Senate. But there is reason to doubt whether the tone of Canadian public life has been materially improved during the period of his administration, and the Senate remains still unreformed, save by the appointment of Liberals when vacancies occur. In a word, it is urged by the censorious that Sir Wilfrid Laurier is an opportunist. However profusely this term may be applied, and however difficult it may be for a political leader to steer a clear course through the shallows of political exigency, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is still to large numbers of his countrymen an opportunist. His changes of front on the trade question and the hesitation that he displayed in the matter of the First Contingent have done quite as much to establish this belief as his neglect to take up the reform of the Senate. The common statement made by opponents is that the idealism of his speeches in opposition has been eclipsed by the materialism of his acts in office.

Mr. Willison's answer to such detraction merits the serious attention of all who are interested in Canadian politics. Himself a man of principle, he sees in Sir Wilfrid Laurier a spirit of kindred views and sympathies. "I have always proclaimed," says Laurier, "and again I repeat, that in politics I belong to the British Liberal school, to the school of Fox and Gladstone. In religion I belong to the school of Montalembert and Lacordaire, of the men who were the greatest perhaps of their age in loftiness of character and ability of thought." The social questions, which come to the surface so frequently in English politics, play a small part in the public life of Canada, and there is no close correspondence between the policy of Canadian Liberals and that of English Liberals as represented, for example, by the Newcastle programme. Yet a sentimental bond exists and, in the eyes of Mr. Willison, Sir Wilfrid Laurier is a true disciple of Fox and Gladstone. The reference to Montalembert and Lacordaire is equally important, for the Quebec *Rouge* who has stood up against ultramontanism is dear to Mr. Willison. If we had more space, we should gladly discuss in detail some of the points which are raised by this biography. As it is, we can only indicate the author's point of view. Mr. Willison is candid, well-informed, thoughtful, and he gives those of us who are Conservatives some nuts to crack. These two volumes are the best *Apologia* for the Liberal party in Canada which has yet appeared.

CHARLES W. COLBY.

Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone. Edited, with an introductory memoir, by HERBERT PAUL. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: George Allen. 1904. Pp. 353.)

LORD ACTON'S personal influence reached comparatively few persons during his life, but those few were the best, and through them he influenced indirectly many who were scarcely aware of his name. The publication of some of his essays and of these letters must serve to fix his public reputation. Fortunately, he will not be remembered merely as the most learned Englishman of his time, for enough of his writings will be printed to explain why, although he never achieved the *magnum opus* he had planned — "The History of Liberty" — he deserves to rank among the foremost historical scholars England has produced.

This volume of letters written by him between 1879 and 1886 to Miss Mary Gladstone, now Mrs. Drew, has three serious claims on the attention of students of history. In the first place, these letters throw light on much of the political situation in England during those years. Lord Acton was a Gladstonian almost to idolatry, and to Gladstone's daughter he wrote without reserve criticisms of men and measures, suggestions, and advice, which she submitted to the prime minister; and it is no secret that Gladstone esteemed Acton so highly that, had the latter desired, he might have held important political office. But his true function was that of a critic at once devoted and yet unprejudiced, who